

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: There were no apologies

The meeting commenced at 10:08 in public session.

Agreed: that agenda items 5 and 6 are covered by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 18 June 2014

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

3. Matters Arising

Table of requests for information from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

The Committee noted the summary table of requests for information from DFP which provided an update on any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. European Investment Bank – Update briefing from Assembly Research

The Committee received an update briefing from Assembly Research on borrowing from the European Investment Bank and other sources.

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 10:10

Mitchel McLaughlin joined the meeting at 10:11

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10:15

Judith Cochrane rejoined the meeting at 10:15

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 10:15

John McCallister left the meeting at 10:15

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 10:18

Agreed: to forward the Research paper to DFP for response to the issues raised and to schedule a Departmental briefing on borrowing from the European Investment Bank and other sources.

Agreed: to write to DFP seeking detail on the current level of borrowing under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI).

Agreed: to commission follow up research on various issues discussed during the briefing.

5. Draft Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill: Outcome of Consultation – Pre-introductory Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the outcome of the consultation on the Draft Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill from the following departmental officials:

- Mr Oswyn Paulin, Head of Legal Services, DFP; and
- Mr Michael Foster, Legal Advisor, DFP.

The session was recorded by Hansard

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:08

Judith Cochrane re-joined the meeting at 11:13

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:13
Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:13
Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 11:17

Agreed: that the DFP officials will provide further detail on issues identified during the session.

6. Small Business Rate Relief Scheme – Briefing from Omagh Chamber of Commerce

The Committee received a briefing on the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme from the following representatives from Omagh Chamber of Commerce:

- Nicholas O'Shiel, Chief Executive, Omagh Enterprise Centre;
- Patrick Bogues, Proprietor, Bogues Jewellers; and
- Hilary England, Business Development Manager, Tyrone Property Company.

The session was recorded by Hansard

Peter Weir joined the meeting at 11:32
John McCallister re-joined the meeting at 11:51
John McCallister left the meeting at 11:58
Ian McCrea left the meeting at 12:00
Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 12:17
Leslie Cree left the meeting at 12:22

Agreed: that the witnesses will consider developing an evidence base to support their arguments on reducing the level of revenue collected from non-domestic rates and as regards their proposed alternative to the rating support offered to charities.

Agreed: to forward the Hansard of the session to DFP for a written response to the issues raised.

7. Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- DFP – Response to Equal Pay query

Agreed: to copy the DFP letter to the correspondent for information.

Agreed: to schedule an update briefing on the DFP proposal for addressing the equal pay grievance relating to Police Service of Northern Ireland/Northern Ireland Office staff, if necessary in closed session.

- DFP – June Monitoring Round Queries

Agreed: to schedule an updated briefing following the summer recess on DFP actions relating the Executive's Asset Management Strategy, subject to the Executive approving the Department's related capital bid.

- DFP – Main Estimates 2014-15 and Budget (No.2) Bill - Reservoirs Bill

Agreed: to copy the correspondence to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development for information.

- DFP – Correspondence to Justice Committee regarding a legal complaint from a member of the public.
- DFP – Response to member of the public regarding Administrative Assistant and Administrative Officer recruitment competitions in the Northern Ireland Civil Service
- DFP – Public Procurement Update on Social Clauses
- DFP – Monthly Forecast Outturn Data - March 2014
- Member of Public – ‘Property-less forced to pay rate debts for fraudulent landlords’

Agreed: to forward to the DFP for a direct response and to seek an update briefing on the review of rates liability for the landlord sector.

- Committee for Social Development to DFP Minister – Northern Ireland Housing Executive Planned Maintenance
- Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment – Installation of Solar PV panels

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12:37

8. Committee Work Programme

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Agreed: that the Committee work programme will be updated to reflect decisions taken today and is published on the Committee's website.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 02 July 2014 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:40

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
02 July 2014